



**SOUHEGAN WATER MANAGEMENT PLANNING
AREA COMMITTEE**

NH Rivers Management and Protection Program
New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
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July 17, 2006

Milford Town Hall

Minutes taken by Lisa Fortier, Executive Secretary, DES Watershed Management

Attendance:

Members: Nelson Disco, Larry Major, Timothy D. O'Connell, and William Ruoff

Nonmembers: Ebert Currier (Merrimack Conservation Commission), Audrey Fraizer (Milford Conservation Commission), Scott Miles (Citizen), Mark Nelson (Pike Industries), (DES Watershed Rivers Coordinator), Al Larson (Normandeau Associates), Tom Ballestero (UNH, presenter), Jamin Warren (Amherst Country Club), Steve Couture, Lisa Fortier and Wayne Ives (NHDES Watershed)

This meeting is being held to present the draft proposed Protected Instream Flow (PISF) report details to the WMPAAC and to stakeholders in the local community. Members of the public are welcome and Technical Review Committee members are encouraged to come to the meetings.

6:45 Status of the Souhegan PISF – Wayne Ives

The committee last met on October 22, 2004. There was an update sent out last June instead of a meeting. The Souhegan Proposed Instream Flow Report is near the final phase. After the report is released there will be a thirty-day review period before the public hearing is held. The presentation will be similar to today's. Questions and comments can be raised at the hearing or submitted during the thirty-day comment period that will follow the hearing. Questions and comments submitted during the thirty-day comment period will get a response. The Protected Instream Flow Report will be revised if necessary based on the comments received and the Commissioner will review the Report and decide whether to establish the Protected Instream Flows for the designated portion of the Souhegan River. Once the Protected Instream Flow is established the Water Management Plan (WMP) development will begin. The plan contains three sub-plans: conservation plan (Affected Water Users), dam management plan (Affected Dam Owners), and water use plan (Affected Water Users). All of the water users that are affected by these rules will get a conservation plan and water management plan, and all the affected dams will have a dam management plan, containing a set of criteria for what to do under certain flow conditions. Under the Water Management Plan all water users will have some kind of active management that occurs when the conditions of the river warrant a response on their part. This may mean changing the hours of operation, or switching to alternative water sources such as a developing a well or storage tank. Conservation and dam management sub-plans may cover most circumstances. The water use sub-plan would only be needed occasionally.

Hard copies and free CD's of the PISF report will be placed in the libraries in the watershed. An electronic copy will also be available on the website as well as available on request from Wayne Ives at DES Watershed Management. The draft version can be found at <http://www.unh.edu/erg/souhegan/> and <http://www.des.state.nh.us/rivers/instream/souhegan/study.html>.

6:52 – 7:00 Election of Chair and Acceptance of Minutes

The previous chair, Pierce Rigrod, had to resigned because he moved out of the Watershed. The Vice Chair was not present so Wayne Ives took on the responsibilities of the chair as there were not enough members present for a quorum.

Minutes: There were no comments on the minutes and a motion to accept the October 22, 2004 minutes was brought forward by Nelson Disco and was seconded by Larry Major. All were in favor and the minutes were accepted. They are posted on the website and the July 17th minutes will be posted on the website with the presentation.

7:00 – 8:15 UNH Draft Proposed Souhegan PISF

Tom Ballestero of UNH gave a presentation on the June 20 draft of the PISF report which was followed by a question and answer session. This presentation will be posted on their website and is on the DES website under the July 17, 2006 meeting of the Souhegan WMPAAC. Paper copies of the presentation slides were distributed.

Summary - The project is a two year collaboration between UNH, UMASS, and Normandeau Association. Minimum flow requirements for PISF (protected instream flow) human and non-human needs during different times of the year were charted. The IPUOCRs (Instream Public Uses, Outstanding Characteristics, and Resources) were recreation, fish species requirements, hydropower, Pollution Abatement, and fish requirements, and spring flooding. Recreation was the highest flow need at 4cfs (cubic feet per second per square mile), which is only met April through late May. There are many periods of deficiencies of flow for IPOCR needs. Hydropower has a 0.7 cfs need. Flow requirements were studied for fish and other wildlife. The flow needed for fish needs are not high but periodic flooding is needed for some amphibian species. The river was inventoried by the Natural Heritage Inventory for rare and endangered fish species. High summer temperatures, as much as flow, are also a problem that needs to be addressed for fish survival. Stream corridor restoration measures can create habitat without the need for increasing flows. Wells that induce recharge from the river may have to reduce pumping.

Questions

Bill Ruoff – The wells at the Milford Hatchery, are they one of those?

Tom Ballestero – Yes, the two wells. The river well, which is fifteen feet from the water, probably gets most of its water from the river and the well that is up on the hill, probably as well. There are other complications there like the hazmat sites [Savage Superfund Site pumping and treating nearby].

Scott Miles - Is too much flow detrimental to some species?

Tom – Yes.

Lawrence Major - Can you give me depth in feet flowing down the river instead of cfs values?

Tom - 4 cfs is about 2 ½-3 ft.

Ebert Currier – How much water do you have to use for agricultural withdrawal before you have to register?

Wayne – If you use more than 140,000 gallons per week you are required to register. That's close to 15 gallons per minute for day and night for a week—about 2 to 3 garden hoses.

Ebert Currier – Does irrigation qualify as a return to the environment?

Wayne – No, return flows only qualify if you can measure the flow being returned. The purpose of irrigation is for the water to be taken up by the plants, not returned to the aquifer. What water returns after irrigation is not possible to measure accurately.

Lawrence Major – What about people with hoses going in the river?

Wayne – We are including people who should be registered. If they are above the threshold they should be in the rules process.

Nelson Disco – The Mother's Day [rainfall/stream flow] event was a ten-year event?

Tom – Yes.

Question?

Wayne – WMPAAC will be meeting during the water management plan process, meeting will be publicized and open to the public. The public hearing for the WMP will happen several months after public hearing process for PISF.

Timothy O'Connell – What will there be as far as public notices?

Wayne – The WMP public hearing [and the PISF public hearing] will be publicized in two newspapers and the website. A mailing will go out to the notification groups by email.

Timothy O'Connell – The draft is on the website?

Wayne – Yes, the draft Proposed Protected Instream Flow report dated June 20th is on the website.

Nelson Disco – Which three wells were the three well inducing recharge

Tom – Both fish hatchery wells and one of the Milford municipal wells.

7:50 Meeting adjourned